

INFORMATION ABOUT JUVENILE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

Updated March 2017

The following information describes the process of juvenile psychological evaluations and provides guidance about what you can expect and how you can assist. Please note that Dr. Nelson is typically appointed to conduct these evaluations by the Court as a neutral evaluator.

Why have I been ordered to have a juvenile psychological evaluation?

If the Court has ordered a psychological evaluation, then the Court is wanting to learn more information about your psychological functioning and to see if you have any mental health, substance abuse, or other issues that would benefit from treatment.

Where will the evaluation be done?

Dr. Nelson will see you either on an outpatient basis at our office, another outpatient location that is mutually acceptable to you and Dr. Nelson (such as a room in a local courthouse or an attorney's office), or in jail, detention, or another facility where you are being held.

Who gets the report(s)?

Your lawyer, your guardian *ad litem*, the judge, and the Commonwealth's attorney typically get a copy of the competency evaluation.

What if I disagree with the results?

Your lawyer can request a second opinion or your lawyer can challenge the results of the assessment in court.

How much will these evaluations cost?

Typically these evaluations are ordered by the Court and paid for through a fund with the Department of Juvenile Justice, which has a set schedule of fees for reimbursement. Private evaluations are done at Dr. Nelson's hourly rate of \$275.

What if I choose not to participate?

Dr. Nelson will submit a letter to the Court indicating your decision. The Court will then decide how to proceed.

How many times will I meet with Dr. Nelson?

In general, you should expect to meet with Dr. Nelson once. Dr. Nelson will interview you with regard to the referral question(s), review relevant materials, and speak with relevant collateral sources. If a second interview is required, Dr. Nelson's office will contact you to arrange for this.

What if I want to talk to Dr. Nelson about the report after I read it?

If you want to talk to Dr. Nelson after you have read the report, please call the office to

set up a phone or in person appointment. If you have additional information you want Dr. Nelson to review or if you want to ask Dr. Nelson to rethink something in the report, please contact the office to ensure this happens. If the new information or discussion leads Dr. Nelson to draw different conclusions, then an addendum to the original report will be submitted.

Is Dr. Nelson going to provide counseling to me?

Dr. Nelson is a Clinical Psychologist who is licensed to diagnose and treat mental disorders, but his/her practice involves exclusively court related evaluations. Dr. Nelson will not provide treatment to anyone he/she has previously assessed or is currently assessing as that would be a conflict of interest.

Does the judge always follow Dr. Nelson's recommendations?

No. The Court is the trier and finder of fact and will make its own ruling based on all of the information presented. You or the other side may either present additional information that Dr. Nelson did not have or the Court may review Dr. Nelson's report and conclusions and disagree with all or part of them.